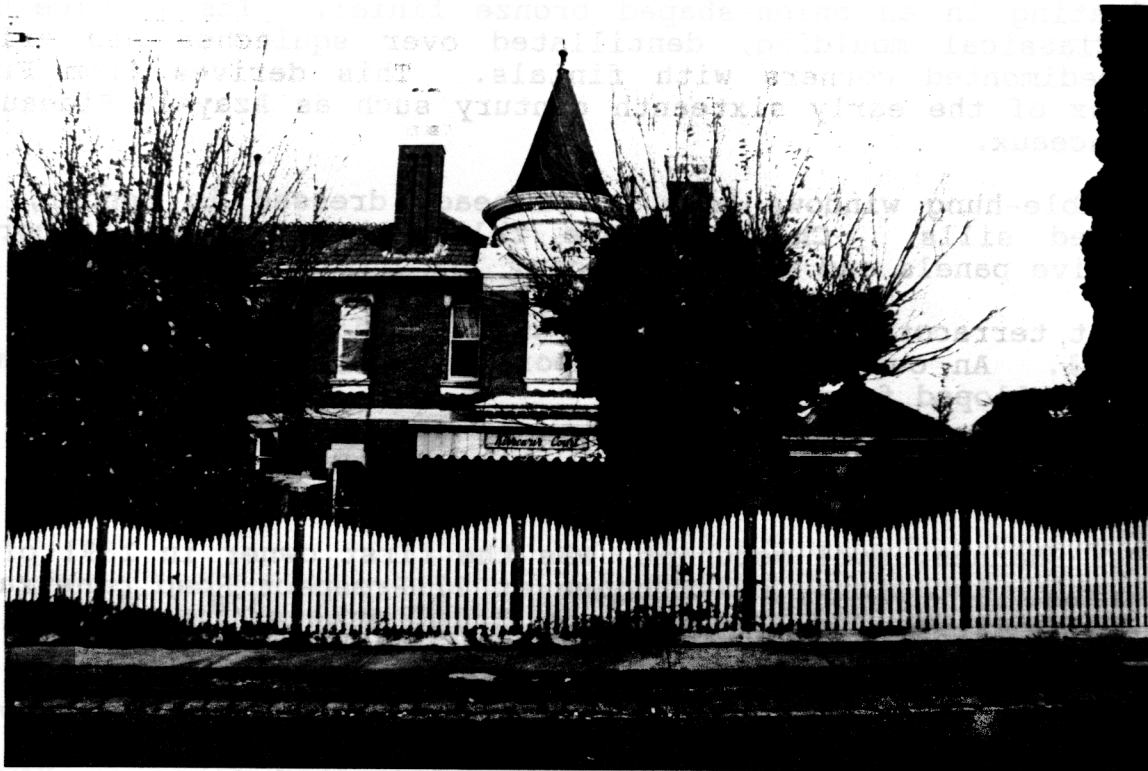


**PLACE NAME** "Kirrewur Court" Reception & Function Centre  
 (former "Kirriemuir") **LEVEL: B**  
**ADDRESS** 77 Prospect Road (SE cnr Pleasant Street)  
**AREA** 8 **DATE/PERSON** 13.5/RP **NEG:** 3.21, 22 & 23



**DATES** Construction: 1891

**USE** Present Use: Commercial  
 Original Use: House  
 Alterations?: Windows; canopy added; single-storey addition to left-hand side

**FORM** Detached  
 Double storey  
 4 Bay

**STYLE** Edwardian

**DESCRIPTION** (I = Intact A = Altered \* = significant)

**ROOF** \* T'cotta tile  
**WALLS** I Brick  
**ROOF FORM** \*\*  
 \* Decoration  
 \*\* Chimneys

**VERANDAH** A Form, glazed  
**FENESTRATION** A Doors  
 A Windows  
**FINISHES** I Paint colours  
 I Brickwork

**INTERIOR**  
**GARDEN & SETTING** A Garden form  
 A Fences & gates  
 Plants  
 Features  
 I Outbuilding  
**OTHER COMMENTS** Candle-snuffer circular tower & finial.

**CONDITION & INTEGRITY** Condition: Excellent  
 Integrity: Altered

**THREATS**

## DESCRIPTION

An Edwardian, double-storey, red brick mansion, with a four-bay front and terracotta tile hip-roof, with terracotta finials. The crowning glory is a circular tower rising over the entrance with a candle-snuffer roof clad with terracotta shingles, like scales, and terminating in an onion-shaped bronze finial. Its cornice is a deep Classical moulding, dentillated over squinches and arising from pedimented corners with finials. This derives from French chateaux of the early sixteenth century such as Azay-le-Rideau and Chermouzeaux.

The double-hung windows have coved heads dressed in render, with scalloped sills. Chimneys have tall blind arches, supporting decorative panels and a receding cap.

The flat terracotta roof tiles are not Marseilles pattern, but tray and roll. An outbuilding contemporary with the house is timber, with a scalloped fascia.

## HISTORY

Charles Shannon, wool merchant, was the first owner in 1891 of the substantial two storey brick house at 77 Prospect Road constructed from the designs of the architect C. D. Figgis<sup>378</sup>. Tenders were called by Figgis in August 1891 and in the following year a two storey brick house of sixteen rooms. NAV 150 pounds, owned and occupied by Charles Shannon, merchant, was recorded in the Newtown rate book<sup>379</sup>. Seaton tells how, following the subdivisions of the 1880s, retired country gentlemen chose elevated sites in Newtown for their homes, some large two storey houses, often architect-designed "but the residents were also just as likely to be doctors or businessmen"<sup>380</sup>.

Shannon's two storey house in Prospect Road was described as consisting of 14 rooms and land in the late 1890s, at the turn of the century and later<sup>381</sup>. In 1914, when Charles Shannon, wool broker, was owner/occupier still, the building was identified as "Kirriemuir", a brick dwelling of 14 rooms with land in Pleasant Street, NAV 125 pounds<sup>382</sup>. In the 1940s it was owned still by the Shannon family, the James Shannon Estate being listed as owner<sup>383</sup>.

Charles Shannon, the original owner, according to Ruth Hill's 1985 article in the Investigator, arrived in Australia in 1865 from Greenock, Scotland, where his father was a sea captain. He joined his cousins in the wool trade. Later, he joined the woolbroking firm of Strachan's and in time became a partner in the Clyde Fellmongery founded in 1875 until it was burned down in 1900. He was also the partner of Godfrey Hirst from the foundation of Hirst's Mill in 1890. In 1890 the Geelong Chamber of Commerce was reconstructed with Shannon as president.

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378. Geelong Advertiser, 15 August 1891. See Miles Lewis' Australian Architectural Index.

379. Newtown rate book 1892-93, North Ward, No 369.

380. Gladys Seaton, Model Borough, City of Newtown, 1893, p.28.

381. Newtown rate books 1899-1900 No 381; 1903-4 No 402; 1914-15 No 448.

382. Ibid.

383. Ibid 1945 No 564.

In 1875 Shannon married Emily Agnes Strachan. They had eight children, four of the sons attending Geelong College. The Shannon family occupied St. Helens from 1883 to 1888, where three of the family were born, after which they moved to Kirrewur Court, Prospect Road, Newtown. Shannon joined the Newtown Council in 1898 and was Mayor 1902-04, having already been a member of the Geelong Town Council from 1879 to 1883. He was also a member of the Hospital Committee from 1877 to 1919. Shannon was appointed Chairman of the Council of Management of Geelong College from 1908 until his death. One of the School Houses is called Shannon and some fours and eights boats were named for the Shannons. Shannon was involved in the community life of Geelong, holding office in both sporting and civic organisations. His charitable interests focused on the Try Boys Brigade which, after his death, met in the former Impey's Coffee Palace bought for the Brigade by Shannon. He was also a member of the Council of the Gordon Institute and a staunch church goer, attending St. George's Presbyterian Church for many years. Shannon died in April 1922 and is buried in the Eastern Cemetery<sup>384</sup>.

### COMPARISONS

Chateaux d'Azay-le-Rideau (1518-27) & Chateaux de Chermonceaux (1513-23).  
Darnlee, 33 Lansell Road Toorak, (Howells & Nicholson, p.70).  
Meerilinga, 1186 Hay Street, West Perth (Howells & Nicholson p.139), and others.

### SIGNIFICANCE

This property has great state historical significance as a residence associated with one of the most prominent Geelong wool merchants. It was built in 1891 from the designs of the architect C. D. Figgis for Charles Shannon, who had associations with the woolbroking firm, Strachans, and was a partner with Godfrey Hirst from the foundation of Hirst's Mill in 1890. Shannon was president of the Geelong Chamber of Commerce and Newtown's mayor at the turn of the century. It has regional architectural significance as an important early Edwardian mansion. Particularly important, is the circular tower, which is detailed with great care and derived from the French chateaux of the early sixteenth century. This may be the finest tower of this type in Australia. Of technical interest are the unusual flat terracotta roof tiles on the main roof and others on the tower which have not yet been identified.

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### RECOMMENDATIONS

<b>Existing Listings</b>	NONE	
<b>Recommend'ns</b>	RNE	LPS Area 8 Place

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384. Ruth Hill, Charles Shannon, in the Investigator, March 1985, pp.22-24.